

it has participated in tsunami relief and other charitable activities. The party is gaining influence among those in Indonesia. But there are also elements in the party in the past who have expressed a desire for an Islamic State and feel that Islam suffered a setback as well as Indonesia suffering an economic setback during the secular dictatorship of Suharto in the ensuing years.

There is a danger of the spread of radical Islam, whether it be in the madrasas or the political arena, the anti-western strain of this intolerant form of Islam, or other activities. I believe, as I have outlined previously, there are courageous and determined people in Indonesia fighting to ensure the future of the country as a democracy and one that values the principle of freedom known in secular government. We must remain engaged so their struggle prevails.

The bigger picture requires active engagement with Southeast Asian countries seeking the path of democracy, human rights, and economic freedom. In my view, the best forms of assistance we can provide are economic participation by American companies in the region and educational exchanges. These were actually identified by the U.S. Agency for International Development Woods Report of the early 1990s which said that economic investment, trade, and education were the most effective ways of strengthening the relations and building the economies of developing countries. I believe that report was accurate, and I think it is the path for our participation in Southeast Asia.

For example, in my recent visit to Malaysia, many leaders we spoke to were concerned that fewer Malaysian students are now studying in the United States than in the past. I believe this educational exchange is extremely valuable for us as well as for students. I hope we can encourage more American colleges and educational foundations to increase their support for educational exchanges.

As noted above, however, I believe we must deal with military restrictions and use our IMET programs and other collaborative efforts as a means of assisting Indonesia, as well as other countries in the area, to work in a constructive fashion with our military in observing human rights and civilian control in that country. Not only is it in the interest of the people in Southeast Asia, I believe it is in our economic interest, our strategic interest, and in our interest in fighting the war against terrorism.

CHINA'S ENACTMENT OF ANTISECESSION LAW

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, the Peoples Republic of China recently enacted an antisecession or antiseperation law, the intent of which may believe would restrict the Taiwanese people's freedom of speech and allow the Chinese

Government to use force to annex Taiwan if China suspects separatist speech making or any other separatist activities on the island. This law has caused a tremendous uproar in Taiwan. Taiwan's foreign minister and chairman of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council have both denounced the law as a unilateral act on the part of China. It will cause tensions in the Taiwan Strait to rise and may have serious consequences for future Taiwan-China relations.

I agree with the assessment that China is seeking to change unilaterally the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. China seems to have abandoned any attempt at future dialogue between the two sides and seeks to impose this law on the 23 million people of Taiwan. Chinese assumptions are that Taiwan and China are now already unified and that China has jurisdiction over Taiwan, especially the authority to serve penalty and punishment to Taiwanese people and their leaders. China has ignored the fact that Taiwan and China have been two separate political entities since 1949 and neither has jurisdiction over the other. China, therefore, has no right to carry out punishment to Taiwanese people and leaders whenever China sees fit.

Predictably, Taiwanese people are outraged by the latest Chinese act and ask the international community to oppose China's new law. So far, with a wait-and-see attitude, the international community has remained quiet on the subject. It is important that we not appease China.

Inaction of the international community will send a dangerous signal and will further encourage China to indulge in its political rhetoric and war-like actions. We must single out the dangers inherent in China's new law, whose enactment will totally discourage the Taiwanese people from seeking a peaceful solution to the Taiwan issue. Now is not the time to empower China to prepare for military conflicts across the Taiwan Strait, just as the EU stands to do by lifting the Chinese Arms Embargo.

In this era of global terrorism and natural catastrophes, war is the last thing we would like to see in the Asia-Pacific region. I urge all Americans and the international community to oppose China's enactment of the antisecession law, and I plead with both Chinese and Taiwanese leaders not to resort to any extreme measures and not to make a bad situation worse. Both sides should allow tempers to cool and keep dialogues open.

May the Lunar New Year bring good will to the Chinese and Taiwanese peoples and may they continue to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THUNE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding we are in morning business until 2 o'clock.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, we are.

BANKRUPTCY REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, for those who do not follow the debate in the Senate very closely, this 500-page bill has been the subject of our debate and discussion for the last 2 weeks. It is likely to be concluded today with a vote, and the vote is likely to be in favor of this legislation.

It is about bankruptcy law. It is something everyone dreads the thought of, that you would reach a point in life where you have more debts than assets, and finally say: I have to go to court and ask for help.

But bankruptcy is an institution created by Western civilized society to respond to a terrible injustice. There was a time in this world when if you were deeply in debt, you ended up deeply in jail—debtors' prison—put in an unconscionable situation where you could not pay your bills and, once in prison, did not have any place to turn.

We decided that in a more civilized society we would acknowledge the fact that through misfortune or miscalculation some people reach a point where they do not have enough money to pay their bills. And if they are prepared to go into a bankruptcy court, file extensive documentation to establish their debt and their assets, the court may consider discharging them in bankruptcy. As a result of that discharge, people lose most of what they have on Earth, but also walk away from their debts and have a chance for a fresh start, for a new day.

That is something that has been in the law for a long time. The law has been amended over the years. We have chapter 7, where you walk out of the bankruptcy court with your debts behind you. Chapter 13 is where an individual tries to repay, says to the court: I don't want to be found to be bankrupt. I am willing to work out with my creditors a repayment schedule. That is what chapter 13 does. So you try to take a limited amount of money and pay it out over a period of time.

For years and years the credit card companies and big banks have said: We want to change this law. Too many people are going to bankruptcy court. The numbers range from 1.3 million to 1.5 million each year, but there is no doubt the numbers are going up.

The credit industry argues: Too many people are in bankruptcy court, and as a consequence, we should limit the opportunity for bankruptcy. So for almost 10 years they have been pushing for this bill—year after year after year.